

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATION —
A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

VOLUME 20 No. 9

SEPTEMBER 1952



after



before

conversion blacksmith shop
dental clinic and offices
waupun, wisconsin

carl e. riemenschneider, architect, milwaukee
second award in class IV, milwaukee division
wisconsin architects association honor award competition

THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECT
 Official Publication
WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATION
 A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN
 INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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 759 N. Milwaukee St., Milwaukee 2 BRoadway 1-1220

Published Monthly
 Subscription, \$1.00 per year
 Address all communications for publication to Editor
 759 N. Milwaukee St., Milwaukee 2 BRoadway 1-1220

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The Surgical Care (Blue Shield) for Milwaukee County was improved on January 1st of this year and remains unchanged at this time.

Details, literature, applications, rates, etc., will be mailed to you soon . . . ENROLLMENT WILL CLOSE NOVEMBER 15th. COVERAGE FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS BECOMES EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 1952.

* * *

**Wisconsin Architects Association
 Honor Awards Exhibit**

TO ALL CORPORATE MEMBERS
 WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS ASSN.

The program of Honor Awards for completed buildings of merit, which was re-inaugurated last year, will be continued this year. The exhibition and judgment will be held at the Milwaukee Arts Institute as a joint exhibit with the American Institute of Decorators.

The official program is now being prepared and will reach you within the next two weeks.

The purpose of this letter is to urge you to prepare photographs and poche plans now of the buildings which you intend to submit for consideration. For your information pending receipt of the program the following rules which are now known can be stated:

1. Mounts 40" x 50" x 1/8" Tempered Presdwood. Not more than two mounts for any one building.
2. All illustrations shall be monochrome photographs except that one photographic print in full color may be used on each mount.
3. No limit to size, number of arrangement of prints.
4. Sufficient floor plans to explain the building. These shall be poche plans, not prints of working drawings.

(Continued on Page 11)

Milwaukee Memorial Center - Its History and Development

The Milwaukee Memorial Center has long been an issue in Milwaukee County. Therefore, we take great pleasure in presenting to you this verbatim account of the talk by Leroy A. Riegel, consultant for the Memorial, and the resulting questions and answers, which gives an insight into the complications of this project. The Site Plan and various sketches were shown. Mr. Riegel, a corporate member of the Wisconsin Architects Association, represents the late Eliel Saarinen and his son, Eero, of Bloomfield Hills, Mich., Architects for the Center. This is another Seminar coverage held in connection with the 1952 Wisconsin Architects Association Convention. — EDITOR.

In order to explain the history and development of this Center, it will be necessary for me first to outline some things which are not necessarily architectural, but I would like to end up in discussing architectural matters and answering any questions.

I would first like to outline the background of the project by briefly explaining the five major points: The legislation and the corporation; The building program; The method of achieving the project; The progress, present status and the next steps; and then discuss the architectural aspects of the project.

As to the legislation, the Wisconsin Legislature in 1945 passed an act, Section 45.05, which together with subsequent revisions makes it possible for any non-profit corporation to go into the business of building and maintaining a War Memorial. It also makes it possible for governmental units in the form of county, city or villages, to participate with such a non-profit corporation by supplying tax funds for either the building or the maintenance of the project.

Now, as to the corporation, this project was started by the Milwaukee Civic Alliance, which is a group of representatives of about 23 service clubs. They thought well of the idea, the gem of what is planned here, and they persuaded fifteen citizens in Milwaukee County to take on the job of achieving this project for the community, and these citizens incorporated themselves as a non-profit corporation, and the articles of incorporation state that the purpose of the non-profit Memorial Corporation is to determine the type of a memorial, to raise funds, to build the project, and to operate the complete project.

Now, as to the building program, the trustees were asked to provide basically and essentially a cultural center in principle and to provide facilities for art, drama, music and scientific activities, and after considerable study of existing facilities in the community and what the community should have, a building program was decided upon to consist of a group of buildings, three major buildings, one, a veterans' building, two, an art center, and, three, audience halls, the veterans' building to be for veterans, their organizations and for civic groups; an art center for exhibitions, study and research; audience halls for music, drama and forums. It will really be a community center in principle.

The method decided upon by the trustees to achieve this project was threefold: To request the County Board of Supervisors to provide a site for the project, to obtain funds for the buildings from private gifts from throughout the county, and to contract with the County Board of Supervisors to maintain and operate the project as to the deficit which would be incurred each year.

Now, an outline of the progress of the project is as follows: The corporation was formed in 1945. In 1946 the building program was decided and an architect was selected and the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution of cooperation. In 1947 pledges totaling over two and half million dollars were obtained toward an eventual building fund goal of five million dollars. In 1948 a site was recommended to the County Board of Supervisors, and in 1949 it was approved and a contract was signed between the corporation and the County Board.

In 1950 the legality of that contract was tried in the courts, the Circuit Court and Supreme Court, and in January of 1951 the original contract was declared void by the Supreme Court. Then in April of 1951 site plan sketches were completed. In September of 1951 the County Board of Supervisors named the originally recommend site, the Juneau site, a memorial park, and in October of 1951 signed a new contract with the County Board, and in November of 1951 the Memorial Corporation took the second contract to the Circuit Court for it to be determined as to its legality, and we expect that there will be a decision before the end of this year on that second contract.

Therefore, the present status of the project is that over \$2,170,000 of the two and a half million dollars pledged is in hand and invested in government securities. The building program is settled. The site has been approved. The site plan sketches have been prepared, and a contract for the development and operation of the project has been signed.

Now, as to the future steps, it is the plan to build the veterans' building first, for which there are funds in hand, and then to proceed with the next building and raise the balance of the money. Of course, actual construction, as you men undoubtedly know, depends primarily on defense building restrictions which may prevail at the time the plans and specifications are completed.

The site is located at the east end of Kilbourn Avenue. It is about six and three-tenths acres. It is located about midway north and south of the county with a commanding view on the bluff over Juneau Park and Lake Park and the lake.

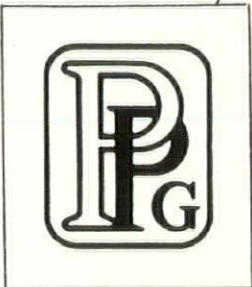
The three buildings comprising the building program are located as follows: The veterans' building, the art center and the music halls. Astor Street is designed to go through the project. It will be necessary that this street be closed when this building is built. Funds are in hand sufficient to build this veterans' building and to start on the art center, but the only definite commitment is to start on the veterans' building first.

The veterans' building, which most people probably would not understand because most people know what an art center is or, at least, they have an idea, and what an audience hall would be, is a building that will provide office facilities for veterans' organizations and civic organizations, meeting room facilities for meetings of from 25 to 600 people, and lounge and recreation rooms, and there will be space in the veterans' building for the listing of names of the war dead of World Wars I and II and whatever is decided upon by the group who will operate and run this project.

So far as we know, there are only three similar buildings in the country, one in San Francisco in connection with the Civic Center Area there and adjacent to the Opera House, one recently completed in Detroit, and one that has been completed since about 1929 in Baltimore opposite the city hall there. It will be a building for organizations, veterans' organizations and civic organizations, service clubs and so forth to have meetings, discussions, groups, and discussions of all kinds. It is not a very dramatic or exciting type of building, but it is of definite community value, and the three buildings similar to this that I have mentioned have been extensively used in the three communities and are considered definite adjuncts to the community life and particularly important.

The art center will provide facilities for exhibitions, study and research. There are not any major art collections owned by the public in Milwaukee as yet, but if such ever do develop, there would be space in such a building as this for those collections. It will be primarily a story and a half building. The

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Saarinen's have some ideas of a split level, but it will be mostly a flexible exhibition space, with a lecture hall or meeting room in it to seat up to 350 people, with a sculpture court incorporated in the scheme.

The music hall, the audience halls as we call it, will be designed with full stage facilities for all musical events, large group meetings of any kind, primarily for music, and with complete stage facilities, side stages, fly gallery, and seating up to 3500 with proper acoustical features, and also to be designed in such a manner that it would be flexible for group meetings of 1800 up to 3500, and there will be consideration given as to how an adequate hall seating those varied numbers can be designed and be satisfactory for both performers and audience.

QUESTION: There will be hundreds of cars that will need to be parked. What has been done in that direction?

MR. RIEGEL: Originally it was recommended that an area west of this site, an area of this city block, be recommended as parking, but in view of the fact that in '48 and '49 there seemed to be confusion in the thinking of planning people as to the necessity or the proper solution for parking, that area was discarded in the approval of the site for the three major buildings and this area was approved. However, this area would still be available for parking, to be

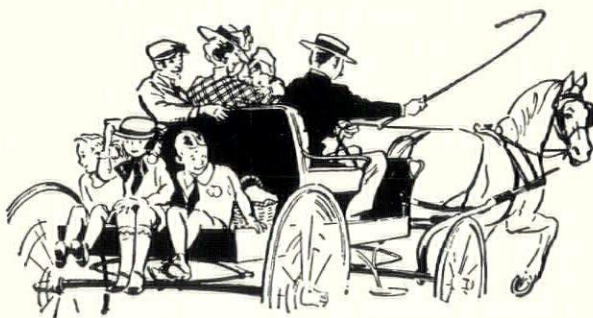
provided either by the city or the county or a combination of both, or this project too, and it would not be needed until this building was started, and presently the City Planning Department has recommended and the City Council agreed to buy two parcels of land in this city block for grade level parking, and this would be the logical location for parking for this project at the proper time. Does that answer your question?

QUESTION: What happens to the block in the middle? Is that going to stay that way?

MR. RIEGEL: Well, at the present time there are about 35 dwelling units in these two blocks. When this site was first discussed in '49, housing was a major problem in Milwaukee. So those two areas with the number of dwelling units were left there. Now, what will happen in the future, I don't know. The site could be improved if those two buildings were developed in the site, but this project will have to be developed in stages because of the funds available, and perhaps some solution will come about those two buildings.

QUESTION: What was the idea in running that tunnel through there?

MR. RIEGEL: Eero has a very definite reason for doing this. His feeling is that audience halls, music halls, large auditoriums like this, are often cumber-



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some and unwieldy shapes and that they can't be very graceful or beautiful by the very size and bulk of the interior design of acoustics and sight lines which make for a structure which is cumbersome, and this unit here of a fly gallery and side stages is functional and can be made in pleasing proportions, but the auditorium, to get your seating capacity, lobbies and foyer, often gets bulky and unwieldy. He felt that this building, a three-story low building with flexibility within it of corridors down the center and rooms around it butted up to this building, would reduce the scale and make it more pleasing in proportion than having the large auditorium there with the large size right by itself.

He also wants to see if he can work out a solution with Whitney (Charles H.), the local consulting engineer, to build a building as this sketch shows, with the exterior structural trusses exposed and the roof dropped, again to bring the building down in scale. They both have their tongues in their cheeks about the possible solution, but that is what they hope to do, and that is why that is shown in that manner. Hence this very unusual shape, which is just about as screwy a shape as you could carve out. This is a very unusual shape, but it happens to work out with the function that this building will perform to butt into that and at this location to have a two-story large hall called a Memorial Hall that can seat up to perhaps 500 people in audience or maybe 350 to 400 in dining space, to connect this building and this building with the stairways in this building and the stairways here serving for this hall and then have it act as a cover for the entrances to these two buildings over present existing streets. We felt pleased and the members of the Development Committee were pleased with the solution that he came up with.

Now the sketches shown are called by Eero Saarinen site plan sketches, and it is agreed that he will go next into what he calls preliminary design drawings for each building, and then the working drawings and specifications. Also there will probably be at least two or three models made in the process of this. There was a small model made in block form before these sketches were completed. There will be another model made, and probably still a third one, since Saarinen goes into model design and the design with models very extensively.

This building was tried in three or four locations — they all were. There was one solution of this building standing on end and being an eight-story building and having it as a tower up here or here, and if it had been here, this building would have been turned around with a courtyard, comprising this building over here. Another one was to put this structure shown on screen up here and have the art center over here and this building connect those two, and there were many solutions tried in quite great

detail before this was finally decided upon, and yet this sketch only crystalizes one thing positively, and that is that this building will be in this general location, that this one will be in this general location, and this one in this. The details of each one of those buildings will gradually unfold.

VOICE: I think he is a genius, but the front end of that theatre would be terrific without that tongue sticking out there.

MR. RIEGEL: That is just what bothered him. You think this is good?

VOICE: I don't like the tongue sticking out there. I think the theatre building itself could be one of the most dramatic things he has ever designed without that coming anywhere near it. I don't know anything about the functional requirements of the building. I mean just offhand looking at it, I think that the design of the front end is wonderful, but I don't like the tongue sticking in there.

MR. RIEGEL: He wanted this to butt in to bring the scale down. He personally feels that the front of most auditoriums is the most unsatisfactory part of those buildings.

VOICE: Wouldn't those external ribs which support the room offer some complicated structural problems where they rest on the proscenium opening?

MR. RIEGEL: Well, the basic thought is that there will be a large column on both sides and a truss across the proscenium on the exterior. The details have not been worked out, and it is just something that they hope they can accomplish.

VOICE: I am interested in knowing if an approach has been made to the city on the projection of the veterans' building over the street.

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MR. RIEGEL: This large hall, to be available from both this building and this building, is desirable — the stairs from both sides, the covering over the entranceways to both of these buildings provided by this building, and then Saarinen's desire to get a mass in front of what he felt was that unwieldy shape to bring it down to scale. It provides for quite a varied flexibility in here, almost more than you would expect. In writing a building program or asking an architect to do that it might seem to be too restricted, but it does happen that this solution provides for all of those things.

MR. RIEGEL: It has been discussed with the City Planning people and they point out there have been streets built over before and that there is a process by which you can make application to do that. We can't go further in deciding about it until, in the first place, the lawsuit is out of the way and, in the second place, sketches of this building are farther advanced, but I don't think there is any technical reason why this cannot be done, and I think from a legislative or administrative point of view of the city it can be done by having this Planning Commission agree to it, recommending so to a committee of the Council and the Council giving a permit to the corporation to put the building over that street.

VOICE: On the contract, what was the difficulty? Why was the original contract declared void by the Supreme Court?

MR. RIEGEL: Well, in the first place, it was the first contract which had been prepared under the legislation which had been passed in '45 so that there was no precedent to go by either the people preparing the contract or anybody else.

VOICE: Between whom is the contract?

MR. RIEGEL: Between the non-profit corporation who are raising the funds to build this project and the County of Milwaukee, but the contest in court developed between the property owners here and this corporation and the County jointly defending the contract. The contract was written in open meetings of the County Supervisors at which representatives of property owners were present and requested certain sections be put in the contract and those sections were subsequently found later in court to be the stumbling blocks. Also, it was the first time that the County had entered into a contract such as this, so that again the lack of precedent was a stumbling block as to just how it should be worded and outlined.

Now with that out of the way and the Supreme Court decision commenting on the whole first con-

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tract, this second method of naming this site a memorial park — just this Juneau Park was made a park — was one step, and the second step is that the contract now in force provides for the development of this project within the memorial park. Now, that is necessary to be decided by the courts again as to whether it is proper in its legal form. Then we can go forward from there.

VOICE: One of the original sketches showed the large concert auditorium and legitimate theatre. Will this project have legitimate theatre facilities? Would that be in the art center?

MR. RIEGEL: It would be over here, if possible at all. Frankly, we were faced with a rising dollar and a shrinking site and a couple of other things. That is what we meant about the flexibility of this auditorium, to provide for a seating capacity of 1800 to 3500, the idea being that the 1800 audience would be mostly for legitimate theatre and smaller musicales. The method of flexibility in an audience hall like this has not been very widely done in the world.

Now, in talking with Saarinen and studies of other projects, there was one constructed in Sweden which used hanging sections that went from pockets or came from pockets adjacent the prescenum and hung on tracks and came out and crossed the ceiling down to the floor and they could divide that auditorium in about three different manners. They provide for audiences of about 800 up to about 2200, and there was a balcony in that auditorium also. Now, I don't know whether something like that will be tried or whether there will be simply the device of a series of balconies in here that could be shut out as far as not turning on the lights and maybe having curtains across to shrink the building down to the size desired for the audience.

Then there is still a third scheme which is being considered, and that is to have the ceiling flexible so that it can be lowered down to the face of those balconies from the prescenum to shrink the whole hall. How practical those various ideas will be and what the eventual solution will be will depend upon

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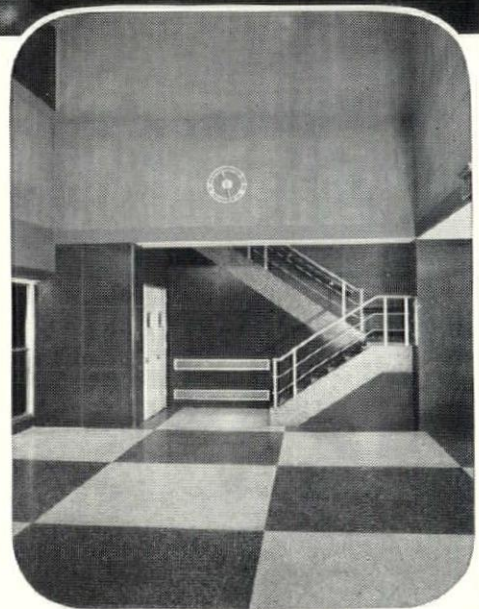
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a lot of study and work, but it is necessary, we feel and the corporation feels, to have a music hall that will be flexible enough for audiences of 1800 up to 3500.

Now, the figure of 3500 may interest you from a design point of view. There are two things which seem to jell there. Promoters or people in the musical field seem to feel that 3500 is a desirable number from a box office point of view. Also, 3500 seems to be the maximum from both an acoustical and a sight point of view. When you get auditoriums larger than that, seating more than 3500, you, of necessity, have to get your back rows so far from the stage that the performers are so small you lose all intimacy and your sight lines get too long. Also your acoustics become a problem and you might have to fall back on a public address system, which is not considered desirable from the point of view of people who are most interested in music and acoustics. The best auditorium in the country from that point of view seems to be the one in San Francisco which seats up to or has a capacity up to 3500 with about 250 standees, both as to the shape, the acoustics and the sight and everything else at that auditorium.

VOICE: The theatre at the University of Wisconsin holds 1300, and they use the curtain system of choking it down, and that is quite successful, but they don't use it in the balcony at all. There are two sets of curtains, one that divides the lower floor into about two-thirds and one-third. You can close off the back third and then you can close off about a half of the balcony, but they never use the balcony curtain.

MR. RIEGEL: Well, that is the point. Eero talked with someone who had gone through that one in Sweden in great detail and to look at the information in the sketches, it is very intriguing with all these moving partitions and the photographs and everything they take of it, but he learned that they use those dividing partitions about ten per cent of the time. The question is whether it is worth the expense and effort to do all of that and then whether the building people who run it afterwards will take advantage of those facilities. They so often just store them away and forget about them. I don't know what the final solution will be, except that it is a part of the program that we want the flexibility in the main hall.

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QUESTION: Have they considered the possibility of doing something with the roof over the veterans' building?

MR. RIEGEL: Yes, sir, both roof and ceiling. That was one thing I just touched on, the roof from an exterior design point of view, and then there is also the consideration of the interior of flexibility as to the space of the auditorium, of having the ceiling on elevators or springs or sky-hooks or something so it will come down and shrink as the side walls will shrink. I don't know that that has ever been tried.

VOICE: I am thinking of the roof in front of the observation gallery.

MR. RIEGEL: Whether this roof will be used for observation or not, I don't know. It could be very desirable that way.

VOICE: It would be very undesirable unless they do something with it.

VOICE: It seems to me that the flat roof in the foreground seriously mars the view of the lake from the gallery there. The great asset there is the lake.

VOICE: What veterans' organization are you planning on accommodating?

MR. RIEGEL: Any of them that wish to use the space.

VOICE: Have free office space there?

MR. RIEGEL: No. The entire building would be for rent, and the use of the space would depend upon primarily veterans and veterans' organizations and then civic organizations generally who will pay for the use of whatever space they do use, either offices or meeting rooms.

* * *

Decoration in Transit

FROM OCTOBER HOUSE AND GARDEN

Decoration is taking a new tack today. Just as modern architecture is edging away from the clinical look into more romantic paths, so decorating is becoming more varied, more flexible. There is a new spirit of informality afoot in the land, a fresh breeze of originality. We no longer believe that certain colors are rigidly right or wrong. We no longer cling tenaciously to a single period in furnishing our rooms. Instead we mix, mix, mix. We mix brilliant colors with pastels. We mix modern furniture with traditional. We mix all kinds of textures for new decorative effects: brick, stone, tile, iron, glass, wood, marble, brass, plastics. The Pacifica look, stemming from the islands of the Pacific, continues to extend its sunswept way across the U.S.A. glorifying such simple fibers as straw, rattan, grass cloth, bamboo. The Japanese influence is evidenced in the trend toward low-axis furniture, in the use of screens instead of walls, in the

play of light against shadow. And back into the fold of decoration have come those perennial favorites: French Provincial, 18th-century Regency, country Directoire, each of them simplified and used in more informal ways. All this adds up to a new freedom of expression. In addition, there's the freedom to roll up your sleeves and get into the act. You can paint with a roller, marbleize with new decalcomanias, flock with a hand-sized flocking machine, spatterdash with a whisk broom. In this issue, *House and Garden* shows you a bevy of provocative rooms that offer a fresh point of view if you are decorating or redecorating.

ALBERT KORNFIELD
Editor-in-chief

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Dr. Ralph B. Peck Giving Lecture Series—October—November

The General Contractors Association of Milwaukee will hold its second lecture in a series **SELECTING and INSTALLING THE RIGHT FOUNDATION FOR A GIVEN JOB**, Tuesday, October 28, at 7:30 P.M., in Room 100 at the Marquette University Science Building, 1217 W. Wisconsin Avenue. The topic, "Varieties of Subsurface conditions" will be presented by Dr. Ralph B. Peck, Research Professor of Soil Mechanics, University of Illinois.

The other topic to be presented by Dr. Peck is "Foundations in Sand and Clay", Tuesday, November 11, in Room 200. This will be continued on Tuesday, November 25 at 7:30 P.M. in Room 100.

Architects, Engineers and Contractors and guests are invited to attend the lectures which are being given in cooperation with Marquette University and Wisconsin Section A.S.C.E.

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HONOR AWARDS EXHIBIT

(Continued from Page 2)

5. All buildings entered must have been completed since January 1, 1948.
6. In most other respects the program of the Fourth Annual Program of National Honor Awards of the A.I.A. — 1952 — will be followed.
7. Entries must be received in Milwaukee by November 28, 1952.
8. An entry fee of \$5.00 will be required for each building entered.

MARK T. PURCELL, Chairman
State Committee on Exhibitions
and Honor Awards

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